

**THE COLORED PEOPLE'S MEETING--Not a Question of Class.**—The proceedings of the meeting of colored citizens on Thursday evening to give expression to their feelings of sympathy or indignation upon the subject of the killing of the colored man Brown by policeman McDonald were, upon the whole, characterized by as much moderation as could be expected under the circumstances. The tone of the resolutions and the language and statements of the speakers were as quiet and temperate as a meeting of white persons, whether Americans, or Germans, or Irish, would have been likely to adopt. What is to be deprecated, however, and what we would specially caution our colored fellow-citizens against, is the disposition to treat the affair as one involving considerations of race or color, or making it in any sense a question of class. We cannot admit that the killing of Brown, even supposing all the facts of the case to be exactly as represented at the meeting, in the language of one of the resolutions, "the culmination of a series of oppressive acts towards the colored race." We are not aware of any systematic oppression in this State or city of any class of citizens by another, nor do we believe that there is any disposition or intention on the part of the police authorities or the members of the force to oppress, injure or maltreat colored people. Accordingly, in what we have already said upon the subject of the shooting of Brown, we have treated the question as one in which all classes of citizens are interested alike. It concerns equally the rights, the interests, the liberties and the safety of all that the limits of legal power should not be transcended by the police force, and that the members of that force should exercise their powers and perform their duties in an intelligent, discreet and proper manner. Under what circumstances a policeman is entitled to enter a citizen's house, without warrant, or when he may be justified in the use of the club, and still more in the use of the pistol, are questions which concern black and white men alike. The rights and interests of the two classes admit of no divorce upon this any more than upon any other question of natural or constitutional right. The right of all citizens "to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects" against unlawful and "unreasonable" arrests, seizures and searches, exists without distinction of race or color. The law in this respect, as well as in regard to the limits within which the police are justified in using the weapons of authority and self-defense which the law places in their hands, is, of course, the same for all. The case of the killing of Brown is to be viewed precisely as if the victim had been a white man, and there is no disposition in the community—still less, if possible, on the part of the authorities—to view it in any other light, and it will be a mistake on the part of the colored people to attempt to make a class question out of it, and above all to present it as "the culmination" of a series of outrages to which their race is specially subject at the hands of the authorities. There is no just ground for any such assertion. It is perfectly true that colored people and their children are "sometimes arrested without cause, and subjected to arbitrary or illegal fines by ignorant, incompetent or dishonest magistrates." Such things happen to white persons, and rich as well as poor have occasion to complain of the annoyance and injustice that proceed from these causes. THE SUN has frequently commented upon these things, and grand juries and the mayor of the city in his messages to the council have complained of the same evil. The need for a more enlightened administration of justice in the large class of cases, both civil and criminal, that fall primarily within the cognizance and jurisdiction of justices of the peace, has been frequently pointed out. The idea of any class of judges, civil or criminal, being dependent for their compensation upon fees paid by the suitors or parties who appear before them is simply monstrous, and yet we still have this relic of feudal and middle-age barbarism clinging to and deforming our system of jurisprudence. In criminal cases, the need of stipendiary police magistrates or recorders, to be paid by a salary, and not by costs or fees, has been urged over and over again. So in civil matters, the poor man's \$5 or \$10 or \$20 case, his question of rent, or wages, or small debt, is as much to him as his wealthier neighbor's \$500 or \$1,000 suit in the courts. He has the same right to have his rights intelligently and impartially judged according to law. Yet the rich man's suit is tried before learned judges, and with the assistance of experienced counsel. The poor man is compelled to litigate, frequently without the help of counsel—which makes it all the more important that the judge should know the law—before magistrates who may be, and too often are, neither competent nor honest. Within the past year or two several magistrates in this city alone have been indicted for malfeasance in office and extorting illegal fees. This is a grievance, however, which, being especially hard upon the ignorant and the poor, bears upon white and black alike. Foreigners, ignorant of our language, and foreign sailors, particularly, have probably more to complain of in this respect than the colored citizens who, at least, have the advantage of understanding what is being said and done, and of knowing when they are being imposed upon. It is idle, therefore, to attempt to make a class question out of abuses like these, from which colored people suffer in common with their poorer white neighbors, not because they are colored, but because, with all our boasted advances, the law has not yet provided for the poor the same facilities and means for an impartial and enlightened administration of justice, by learned and able judges, that it aims to secure for the wealthy and well-to-do. Instead of having a separate interest in this matter or a distinct case of hardship or "oppression" to present, we think the colored people will find here only another illustration of how inseparably their interests are bound up with those of the rest of the community, and how in every effort for reform concert, not diversity, of action is needed.